

STAR OF THE EAST



A Journal issued monthly for liberal thought, the help of self and others by the practice of concentration of mind ; in Unity with the Universal Soul.

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The Spirit and the Letter.

"The word was with God, became flesh, and lived amongst us;" and in another place in the same Book (the Bible), in which we read these words, we find another statement, saying, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

When we understand that by the Word is meant the Divine Law, we will be apt to say that the two statements which we have given above are contradictory, as one says that the "letter killeth," and in the other that the "Word was with God, of God, took flesh, and lived amongst us." If we do not read this from a spiritual point of view, we will say that it is opposite one to the other; but if we have become awakened we will see clearly what is meant by the letter being the killer. One cannot know by the letter, as experience alone is knowledge, and it is involution which brings evolution, and the latter gives the real knowledge.

The letter is the law by which we unfold, but it *must be unfoldment*, in order to have wisdom, and wisdom is the result of experience, and knowledge is the outcome of experience.

When we understand this we shall see what is meant by the quotations given above. A man may read all the books in the universe, but he will only know as far as he has had experience.

Have we not been taught the letter without knowing the spirit which is underneath it? Have we ever understood a single line of the Book called "the Word of God" from the power of the spirit? No; and this is the reason why most of humanity are spiritually dormant, as it read and read; and, it being only the outer senses which takes part in the reading, it is (as our beloved teacher, the late Swami Vivekananda so often used to tell us), "not to read so, that our reading would be no more than intellectual Gymnastics."

It is far harder to help those to become spiritually quickened who have read and read, and never brought the knowledge which they have received through the reading into spiritually practical use.

Some of our intellectual friends become so satisfied with themselves because they have read, that they think they know everything, and they feel that they can be taught nothing; and this self-consciousness becomes a "stumbling-block" in their way for the higher evolution, because they are not involved; how can they be evolved?

When people think that they can reach the higher understanding by "mental exercise" (as Swami Vivekananda used to say) they will find out that it means *life* from within, and it does not depend upon how much we have read, as many who are too illiterate to write their own names know more of the Divine Law than those do whom Jesus called "hypocrites" because they thought they knew so much by reading the Law and the Scriptures—that they acted in the presence of the Master as though He could teach them nothing. Our churches are dying for want of spiritual food; the people there have read the creeds in their books until they have become spiritually dormant, and they are rocked to sleep by the assurance from their ministers "that God forgives sins, and by His grace mankind shall go to heaven;" and if anyone asks to know how it can be so, they are told "that they must not pry into the secrets of God," but swallow whole everything which is given them, without waiting to have it explained.

If it ever was true that "the blind leads the blind," we find it amongst those who constantly repeat what others have said and written.

We hear sermons and lectures, and we read books, but most of it is the repetition of what others have said and written, and we have so little of the original that it does not strike home to the hearts of the masses; and this is the reason why people are so void of spirituality, with their houses filled with books and magazines.

Read; but *read with the soul*, and know that reading is the communion with the soul. Surrender all things and live in God, and thus only shall we know that we are "also God's," as Jesus said upon one occasion.

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Intellectual lessons should be nature's sermons; and that gospel alone can teach us nature's laws, and show us how to live in harmony with them.

"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," and this means that we should not be satisfied by that which only opens external senses, but live in the reality underneath the letter.

Let us not think that what we perceive with the senses is the real, but that is real only which the senses does not realise until they have become quickened. "O, Infinite Energy, of infinite prowess art thou. Thou dost interpenetrate all things. So art thou all. Homage behind and around thee; homage to thee, O, All, from every side."—Bhagavad-Gita.

Love's Communion.

LESSON FOR HOME DEVELOPMENT.

Beloved.—The more we listen to the voice of Divine Love within us the more we shall see that all are children in God's household; and we shall make another discovery at the same time, that "we are the offspring from the same life of the Father," and the more we become known to one the other the closer we shall come to the light within us emanating from the great "over-soul." We must learn the fundamental principles upon which to base our growth, and as *love* in its unselfishness is the very food for all things, we must understand it and make it a practical certainty.

What will take place within us when we have learned to love all mankind and things? The "Illuminator," the Conscious Self within, will manifest. Bhagavad-Gita says, "I see the Lord and all God's power in the frame, and likewise all the hosts of beings, Brahma and Isa, who is seated upon Brahma; all the Rishis; and all shining races and serpents" (serpents' wisdom).

"Wreathed in Divine garlands, robed in Divine garments, anointed in Divine unguents, all wonderful, brilliant, infinite, and all faced."

"Were thousands suns to all at once burst forth in the heavens, then might the majestic soul's radiance be compared to that brilliancy."

This is love's tribute to the Divine, and love alone can bring forth the glory of that within us.

It must be understood, it must be lived, it must be given in abundance, in order that God of the manifold manifestations might be known.

The human race does not know the love which frees it from every bondage; hence it is bound up in that which hides the glory of the self in man. With love comes eloquence, taste, gentleness, patience, virtue, and most of all the compassion which Jesus showed for humanity when He went into the garden and laid the ignorance of the masses before the Divine Throne of God. Pride will be gone when we understand love, and combativeness and retaliation will not be known to such a one who has been illuminated by that love. Life will

be more and more beautiful, and all things in it will bespeak the truth that God, with all His potentialities, is in all things. The first lesson in self-development is universal love.

When we meet together, let us have nothing else in our mind than love, see nothing but love in our neighbour, see nothing but love in the plant, see nothing but love in every manifestation, for God is there, and He is love personified.

Do not be troubled by things which do not belong to us; let each one in the Divine Household work out their own "Karma;" do not condemn the weak and stumbling, but love them, and in that wise we will not attract to us their weakness. Pass no judgment upon anyone, but send them love's food, and nourish their minds with the finest and best that there is in God's generosity, in order that they might become quickened as soon as possible, and that they may be able to feed themselves and rise in strength. When we go together to read and discuss questions, have no other thoughts than love, and *let the world alone* at such time, at least, and we will lay at the breast of our Divine Mother, God, and sap the nectar from Divinity itself; and in that way we will be like youths who have never heard of sorrow, but by reflecting the life within we will shine forth that light to others so that they can see the path and find their way back to "their Father's house." That is true self-development; no one can do that for us; we must feed, grow, and give an account for ourselves.

Stop to "back-bite," stop to trouble of things which do not concern us; let everybody alone, and see to it that we are constantly at the bosom of God, and shine forth His light in our daily lives.

Be filled with love when you take up your studies, be filled with love while reading every line, and the radiance of the God-power in each word shall shine upon it, so that the most difficult will be understood.

Do not forget what I have said in this lesson; do not lay the *Star* aside after having glanced through it, but take it up again and again, and more power each time it is read will flow from the words in it.

Begin to love unconditionally; do not feel whether those are worthy to be loved or not; that does not concern us; just love, not for love in return, but for love's sake, and life will be very beautiful to all of us.

Let us practise this lesson, think of nothing when you read but love—that *free love* which seeketh not recognition of the body, but true, pure and childish love such as the Angels have for us.

Announcements.

Let all whose subscription is terminated renew it at once, as you cannot afford to miss the *Star*, which will be more and more interesting for each place we go to. Send all money-orders to J. S. Warner, Manager, C/o P.T. Library, 5, Moore Street, Sydney, Australia.

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Pearls by the way for the Pilgrims.

Song to Rama Krishna, by His devoted disciple, Narendra (Swami Vivekananda), which reads as follows:—

"In the temple of the heart dwelleth the eternal truth, ever beholding His glorious and lovely form, when shall we dive in the sea of His great beauty?"

"In the form of infinite wisdom the Lord will enter my soul.

The restless mind filled with wonder will take refuge at His feet.

Immortal Bliss, like embodied nectar, will rise in the Firmament of the soul."

"At thy sight we shall be mad with joy, even as the Chakora (aquatic bird) is maddened at the sight of the moon."

"O, King of Kings, there is none like thee, all good and all peaceful.

At thy feet, O beloved, I shall offer myself, and thus fill the aim of my life."

"Even here shall I enjoy heavenly bliss, so great a privilege where could I find?"

"O, Lord, beholding thy pure and perfect form, all sins will take flight,

Even as darkness vanishes before the light."

"O kindle in my heart the light of burning faith, fixed firm like the polar star, and thus, O friend of the meek, fulfil my one desire.

Day and night, emerged in the Bliss of thy love,

O, I shall forget myself, having attained thee.

O, when will this come?"

I have nothing to add to the above words, which are the tribute of love from a humble disciple to his master; but let our readers read each line, and be still and receive the flames of pure love which they send forth, and they will teach us a lesson of devotion to that which is underneath the material.

Lessons in Concentration.

It is most essential that we remember when in concentration to well understand that we deal with universal principle of that of which we are thinking, and not an individual only, and all who have taken our studies in concentration will remember that we have emphasised that.

We will awake to the truth some day that we must select the higher out of the lower, and then recognise it as the higher before we can become much benefited by it.

The whole world is in strife, and by concentration we can do much towards helping humanity to see the power and meaning of this; and if we hold in our mind the higher we will be able to countermand the lower with it. I would like to remind all students of our lesson for Thursday, and I would also say that we can believe as much as we please, but we will not have the benefit, nor

will we give benefit to others, until we try and live in our daily lives those principles.

We need to evolve all of the power which is latent, so that we can begin to practise love and charity as that day (Thursday) demands, and we must also remember that as we think of others so they will think of us, and that is the reason why we would impress upon all who have studied both suggestion and concentration to surrender to the Divine within us and bring out as much as we possibly can by which to help others.

We should not have ourselves in view, but what we can do for others.

Let the concentration this month be *for more power to help others*, and by holding our mind in receptivity for more power we will come in contact with it, and we will also come into the vibrations of those whom we can help; and thus all the life in the universe which is affinity to that upon which we hold our thoughts will be brought to bear in its favour.

Always bear in mind that charity and forgiveness is the foundation for the help which we will give and receive in concentration.

We make our own life, and we prepare our own future, and we shall either be blessed or condemned for what we have done for our fellow-men.

Let us be together in concentration for *missionary work* which belongs to Thursday a few minutes each morning in the week, before meal, for 30 days.

Letter to the Readers of the "Star."

Auckland, New Zealand.

Beloved Readers of the *Star*.—

From the above will be seen that we have entered a new field of our work in the "Islands of Wonder," and to our surprise we have been very well received here, although we are total strangers. We left Sydney the 14th of October, and, as I mentioned in the last issue, we received a most hearty and loving farewell from our friends and students in that country. The difference between this country and Australia is very great, and in many ways this country (small as it is, and young as it is) is far advanced. The people here in the majority are far more intellectual than the average we met in Sydney. Of course, those who studied with us and came so eagerly to hear do not belong to those who manifested so little of mentality as those we saw on the streets, arrayed in all their splendour and in colours like the rainbow.

We had a most wonderful trip between Sydney and here. The latter "usually is very rough," we are told, but weather and sea were ideal when we came, and we came here filled with all the vigour and happiness possible.

I was booked to speak here the same evening we arrived, but the boat got in too late for that, so there was one little disappointment, but it was soon over. Auckland is beautifully situated, and its harbour (though not as elaborate as in Sydney) is beautiful, both sides of which there are high hills, upon which are built cottages, more in the Californian style than any other, and in the background one can see the high mountains, some green, and others looking like melted and cooled lava. One can readily see the *furor* in the earth manifested in the past upon these Islands, and that suggests to one that there must be many old relics to be found from those days; and although I have not yet seen anything of the "many wonders which are to be seen here," I can fancy the earth boils, and thus "hot cakes" are made all the

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time in the boiling earth without the agency of human hands.

As usual, I am the pioneer here as far as Vedanta is concerned, for here has not been anyone with its beautiful gospel before me.

I am told "that a wave of mental unfoldment has come over New Zealand," and for sure the people are coming out to the lectures very readily, and they are truly seeking to understand. I find much intellectuality but very little spirituality here; but the time is coming when the God within will pour forth the life which must manifest to the physical and through it, for it seems that all things have their time.

I cannot help but note that the people as a whole are more liberal than the average in Sydney, and in many ways New Zealand is ahead of the latter place. Here are given much larger wages than in Australia, and things go more rapidly about than they seemed to do there.

The people here dress neatly but quiet; the material of their clothes is solid and very good indeed; the predominant colours one sees on the streets here are black, white and navy blue, and their head-gear shows that the milliners are not wanting in elegance, taste and grace.

The place is well supplied with everything one would want, except Vedanta literature, but I found in the "New Thought" book store two or three Vedanta books written by Swami Vivekananda. The Theosophists are very strong here, and I am told that the Mental Scientists are a goodly number. Would that the day were near when one could make all these beautiful souls see that it would be better and stronger if all the little groups went together into *one body*, and were so liberal with one the other that perfect harmony prevailed in the differences.

The progress here must be phenomenal when one sees how built up this is and finds that the place is only "60 years old." One can see that it is comparatively new, for all the houses, with few exceptions, look new.

Things are very dear here, and yet, when one considers that this country, being all by itself, surrounded by the mighty waters, having all things shipped here, it cannot help but be expensive. Printing is very high, and New Zealand financially pinches us black and blue for the printing of the *Star*, as here we have to pay almost double that which we paid in Sydney for our little paper, but God will provide. It has been very windy here since we came, and we have not experienced any warm weather as yet.

The beauty of the moonlight has been so great that one cannot find words to express it. It seems as though her majesty of the evening heavens were making her face much larger by her smiles, and that as one looks at her one feels that she is coming to us, or we go closer to her. To behold her great light upon the green mountains is something for the specially-inspired painter, but no human could in matter choose the colours so perfect, so tender, strong and charming as they are. It quite reminds one of Wagner's "Lohen-green," when the silver-arrayed "Knight of the Holy Grail" comes in response to the prayers of the maiden, borne by the Swan, in moonlight; and when one sees him depart in his boat, drawn by the Swan, slowly glide out of one's sight by the light of the moon, one lives it, one is part of it. Have you seen it? Can you forget it? Can one forget his farewell to "his beloved Elsa," handing over his sword, his trumpet, his ring, etc., while the full moon casts its bewildering rays upon their faces? Can it be forgotten? And that scene has been making itself very vivid to my memory while I have stood still and looked, spoken, and sung to the glory of God such as She,

and He in one reveals the splendour of the soul's beauty and life within. Nature in New Zealand shows its masterhand, where human hands have never touched.

If we possibly can, we shall go to "the centre of wonders of New Zealand," a place some distance from this city, where the natives have their head-quarters, and while there we shall try and see all we can, so that we can tell you something about it in the *Star* from time to time.

The electric system is very good here, according to the size of the place, and we are told that the principal railroad has just been finished and begun to run. The climate is most wonderfully invigorating, and I feel like a "new-born" since I came here. I feel sometimes like sitting down on the street amongst the children and playing with them. I feel so light in my body that I could romp about and kick like a young calf. This climate has "magic" in it, and I cannot see how anybody can "feel old" here; all I have seen have rosy cheeks and contented faces.

The women have franchise here, and yesterday was the General Parliamentary Elections, and I must say that it was a strange sight to see carriages, automobiles, two-wheeled carts, cabs and other vehicles pass the house where we stop filled with young women; and all day here was one stream of vehicles back and forth.

One thing which makes the tourist feel very happy here is the Cosmopolitan spirit which is generally shown among the people; they make one feel welcome without saying so, for they give you a smile and a nod of the head without speaking—perhaps because they see that we are strangers,—and that spirit seems to be totally absent in Sydney. The people there are lovely when one learns to know them, but when they do not know you they make you feel like an orphan more than one ever felt before.

In this respect Australia and New Zealand is entirely opposite to one the other—all street cars here stop 10.30 a.m. on Sundays for church, and 6.30 in the evenings; and it is wonderful to see people flocking the streets going to church, particularly in the evenings, as services are held at 7 o'clock. Everything is closed "very tight." One could not have a glass of lemonade if one wished it.

Here is a splendid Public Library and Art Gallery, and small but pretty parks, where music is given for the public.

The residential part of Auckland is mostly on the hills, and one has to swallow the refreshing air from the harbour, with a little dust in it now and then. Here are numbers of large boats, and the wharfage is very good indeed, and they are building new wharves at present.

We had quite a difficulty to obtain rooms, as all places are well filled up, and rents are very high. Here are fine churches and public buildings, and Sunday mornings the chimes peal out like we used to hear in Vancouver (B.C.) and in Sydney, reminding one of hundreds of years ago and more, when the people used to remove their hats at hearing them.

I have so much more to tell you, but there is no more space in this *Star*, hence I must close, and leave the political campaign, in which the women took part, to my next letter, and also the account of our work here.

We shall go from this place to Christchurch, and from there to Wellington, leaving Dunedin by for this time, as we do not feel that the people ("being, we are told, very narrow and orthodox") are not ready for us, and that we can do better work and more good by going where they will understand better what we have to give. —Lovingly yours, SISTER AVABAMIA.